

Karl Dehn, President & CEO of Battle Creek Unlimited
Michigan Senate Committee on Military & Veterans Affairs
Tuesday, February 7, 2012

Good afternoon. My name is Karl Dehn, and I am the President & CEO of Battle Creek Unlimited, which is the economic development organization for the Cities of Battle Creek and Marshall in Calhoun County. On behalf of Battle Creek Unlimited, I would like to urge your support for Senate Resolution 113.

The 110th Airlift Wing and the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base provide the United States and Southwest Michigan with unlimited potential pertaining to the location and support of future military, homeland security and state missions. It's location in the center of FEMA Region V combined with its state of the art facilities and highly experienced airmen make it a logical choice for stationing any mission ranging from airlift, fighter, or cyber missions to name but a few. The Battle Creek Air National Guard Base is ideally suited for a manned or unmanned flying mission with its numerous hangars and maintenance facilities, unencumbered clear areas, lack of encroachment issues and three runways, the longest of which is over 10,000 feet in length and is capable of supporting any aircraft in the United State Air Force or sister services. Failure to make use of the facilities and runway access will deny the Department of Defense and the United States access to assets that are critical to the defense of our great nation and the State of Michigan.

We support the U.S. Air Force plan to place the MQ 1 and/or MQ9 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles mission at the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base. This is an enduring mission and places the base at the front end of technology and future military capabilities.

Based upon the current proposal, we believe the potential exists to lose more than 100 positions at the base, but we expect that final manpower proposals will not be known until mid-March 2012.

We also believe the possibility exists that other missions could be attracted to the 110th that will reduce the overall job losses at the base.

The infrastructure remains available to support a C-27 mission or another replacement flying mission. The Department of Defense should be encouraged to place a flying mission in Battle Creek that would support national defense, homeland security, & the emergency needs of our country. Resolution 113 would support the continued pursuit of such a mission.

- The Battle Creek Air National Guard Base has supported the deployment of over 3,000 soldiers and Marines in the past 5 years, as it serves as a critical deployment hub for over 40 DoD units located in Southwest Michigan.
- The Battle Creek Air National Guard Base is one of the most modern facilities in the National Guard with the average age of most facilities at less than 16 years old.
- The 110th Fighter Wing consists of a highly experience work force with the average time in service over 13 years. Over 55% of the members have combat experience and many have deployed multiple times since 9/11/2001.

In the interest of security for our nation and our state, and in the interest of economic development for the State of Michigan, we urge your support of Senate Resolution 113.

Thank you.